

B. 1. 6, V. 9, # 51

Leicester, Mass. Nov. 18/62.

Dear friend Webb,

Yesterday noon brought me your letter of Oct. 30th. After an interval of 3 months and a half, it was pleasant again to see your hand-writing. I had begun to feel really concerned for your physical & mental health, and was debating in my mind the advisability of an attempt to learn, from some other member of your family, just how you were. But I readily see ^{now} the cause & reason of your long absence. What you say of the effect upon you of your great loss sufficiently and very naturally explains your indisposition to any unusual or unnecessary effort; none could wonder at it. We have all been deeply touched at the new tribute which your heart poured forth to the excellencies & virtues of your dear wife - the memory of which must be your greatest solace, though at the same time keeping your loss so fully before you. You say nothing particularly as to the health of yourself & your children. One of your daughters was left quite ill at her mother's death. Has she quite recovered from that?

I am particularly obliged to you for sending me Prof. Cairness's Lecture at Dublin, & for what you say of it & of him. I have made & send a little ^{paragraph or two} to the Standard about it, & shall do what I can to have it printed there entire. I am sorry for the typographical errors which occur repeatedly in the latter half of it, some of the sentences being quite doubtful as to their actual meaning, & some of the dates being clearly erroneous. Still, as a specimen of newspaper enterprise, - the entire lecture given in type on the morning following its delivery, - it is very creditable to the Express. I have read the lecture very carefully, - every word of it. I am struck with the soundness of his views on the general subject, at the accuracy of his details in particulars. He has evidently been,

as you describe him, an able, a thorough, and a conscientiously
fair student of our history & affairs; & the whole summary
is very sensible & will, with some comparatively ^{un-}important
exceptions, stand the test of the most thorough investigation.

We are, as a country, indebted to Prof. Cairnes. Had
such candour & good sense as he displays, had a modicum
of his impartial spirit (impartial, not partisan, or biassed
towards us) prevailed among the leading men, Clashes, &
journals of Great Britain towards this country, during our
bitter, still bitter struggle to free this Continent from what Lord
Carleton well calls "the hideous grasp of Slavery", our land
would not now be pervaded, ^{to a great extent} as it is, with ~~an~~ ^a ~~strong~~ ~~feeling~~
feeling of abhorrence for England in the selfish course she
has pursued, of mortification in the example she has set of
repudiating her own best history, & of resentment at the narrow
~~and~~ ~~selfish~~ spirit she has exhibited towards ^{us.} ~~the world~~
I feel it the more, because I had entertained such different
opinions and views of England. I see, indeed, that ^{there} is a
contest in England no less than ~~there~~ here in our Northern States.
I see that there, as here, the sober judgment, the settled
convictions of the intelligent & disinterested masses, the conscience
& principles of the high-minded, lean to the side of Freedom,
And I see that there ~~is~~ ^{is} an immensely wealthy &
powerful Class, (or rather Classes,) who feel, ^(some of them) that now is
their time to cripple the American Republic, and pay off
old scores of Revolutionary and later times; ~~and~~ to feed
this old grudge of theirs they are not too nice or scrupulous
to take the slave-trader's & slaveholder's bloody & dirty
hand in their aristocratic & dainty hands, and to give
him such countenance and assistance as may be needful
to compass their own objects. Others of them - the Cotton
men - with a shortsightedness which is the invariable
characteristic & accompaniment, I believe, of selfish greed,

must be upheld inasmuch as they
think the Cotton-producing States can serve their turn the
best. With these join the Trading and Shipping Classes who
see in the Slaveholding States a ^{race of people} very dependent on others for
all the comforts & luxuries & many of the necessaries of life, - all
to be supplied ^(they trust) by British manufactures, British Shipping, & British
free trade. To men bent on mere success in the scramble for
money, these last considerations are a most powerful temptation.
Similar considerations have been operating ^{here,} under our own
eyes, for scores of years, and the political & moral demoralization
^{of this country,} of which Prof. C. speaks, none too strongly, has ~~been~~ been
largely caused by their influence. Now these several Classes in
Great Britain, for the first time, have been acting cordially
& vigorously together, since the Southern Rebellion broke out;
~~and~~ their action has inspired, not only the masses of the
American people, but more impartial & dispassionate
observers abroad, (among whom I think the Count Gasparin may
be named,) with - I must say it - a contempt for their
spirit, motives, & object, which any language of mine is
feeble to express. Whether these aristocratic and trading
Classes combined are to rule England - is the question now.
We hope not; we hope it (as we believe) as much for England's
honour & her ultimate interests, as we do for our own
sakes. For we, as Americans, feel that we have an
historical & a personal stake in England's honour & character;
& her good, or her evil, deeds reflect their own spirit &
character in some measure upon us. But we are not
the custodians of England's honour, nor in any position now
to be very calm judges in the matter, I suppose. But we
have not lost our moral discernment; and we now look
with a most eager (to me a painful) interest to see whether
Principle or Selfishness, Justice or Spite, Self-Respect or
Self-aggrandisement, shall carry the day in the councils and

action of Great Britain towards us. Amongst her solid, edu-
cated, thinking, people we fully believe the former of all
these prevail and actuate; but the latter bear sway, we see,
amongst her aristocratic & her moneyed classes, with those who
usually hold the reins of Government. Hitherto these ~~states~~ ^{classes} have
been the noisy, the demonstrative, the busy ones; & under their
vicepant appeals, the Government, though not yet turned
from its original purpose, ^{appears to be} well-nigh palsied as to any
action. ~~Immense supplies~~ ^{British} Immense supplies for the Rebellion go
from ~~the~~ home & provincial ports, & meet with such large
pay of some sort that they can afford to lose many ships & cargoes
by capture. Iron-clad vessels of war for the Confederates are
built in ~~the~~ British ship-yards; the most effective
armament put in them, & they openly leave to do their work of
destruction upon American Commerce, ^(and that too under the British flag!!) while an American
vessel of war is not suffered to enter a British port for any
supplies, even of fuel. "What kind of neutrality is that?
Is the British Govt. going to succumb to these ^{I have referred to} vile influences?
We are constantly assured not. You assure me that we
need not fear intervention. And I know that if these
questions are decided upon established British rules and
principles, intervention cannot take place in favour of the
Slaveholding South. But there is the very difficulty. Will
they be decided on these principles? If Prof. Cairnes, and
J. Stuart Mill, and John Bright, & the Daily News, & a
few other journals are regarded, all will be right. ^{But} What
is the out-look of the matter now? Taught by so fair &
candid an example as Prof. C., I will not pre-judge the
case of England's future. She has much to do to wipe out
the record of the past eighteen months. - I hope the appeal wh.
the Daily News has just made to ~~the~~ ^{the Eng.} Govt., to stop the building of Confederate
vessels of war in British dockyards, or else rescind the Neutrality proclamation,
will have consideration; and that either the one or the other will be done.

I ventured to suggest some exceptions to the views presented by Prof. Cairnes in his lecture. And first, & chief, is the view he holds of the negro's capacity, and present degree of intelligence - I speak now strictly of the Slave population, & those recently so. I think he underrates them altogether, when he resembles them to the "harmless cattle in our fields". In respect to the harmlessness, I quite agree with him; but when he places them on that low level, in any respect, he does them I think much injustice, & must increase in his own mind the obstacles which hinder any real benefits to them. The Slave population ^{as a mass} have evinced a degree of intelligence & good judgment during this rebellion, which we look for utterly in vain with the dependent, ignorant, yet proud "poor whites" of the South. Individual cases have appeared in the papers, & are familiar to you, of Slaves who have shown a remarkable degree of judgment, of skill, & of good feeling. Their patience, under great wrong & injustice of our people, has been most admirable and striking. In spite of manifold rebuffs, they still evidently hold fast in the faith that their Salvation comes out of the North; and they are right in thinking so. But they have been cautious not to commit themselves to the Northern Cause, where they are utterly powerless to defend themselves, and where they have no reliable encouragement to do so. And who can blame them for that? I boldly say that, to-day, the Slave population of the Southern States possess, morally & intellectually, the traits of character & the qualifications which entitle them to the preference over the ^{poor} white population of those States, (with the very few exceptions of the Anti-Slavery ^{men to be found among them} ~~men to be found among them~~), in regard to all that is most desirable & most elevating among men, and in regard to the future possession & occupancy of the Soil there. They have fulfilled God's condition of work before use & enjoyment, & stand ready to fulfill it in the future. They could get along without the whites, far more easily than the whites could without them. They will have the advice and instruction they require from friendly whites, and will prove

themselves worthy of a name and a place in the land.

- Aquin, Prof. C. greatly errs, I think, when he says that ^{the attempt to carry on the war} ~~hitherto the war has been carried on~~ upon Constitutional principles has now been abandoned, pointing to the "Proclamation" in proof of this. Not so. From the first moment that the Rebellion began, it has been wholly Constitutional, under the War Powers of the Government, to use the Slave population of the Country in any way by which the interests & safety of the Republic could be promoted, - even to the extent of setting them all free. This was the solemnly declared opinion of John Quincy Adams, the great Master of American Constitutional Law, more than twenty years ago; & with him agree our ablest jurists today, though many prominent ones dissent. But we consider it established beyond ^{reasonable} question, ^{that} The President, and Congress ~~may~~ may decree the Abolition of Slavery and the Freedom of every Slave, under the Common Right of every Government, in time of War, to act for its own defence & safety. And to act thus is no infringement of the Constitution, but the incumbent duty of those who have sworn to maintain it and to uphold the Government under it. So instead of saying that the Constitutional conduct of the war has been abandoned, it would be more correct to say that now a juster interpretation of the Constitutional Powers of the Government, in time of War, has succeeded to the uncertain, feeble, compromising policy hitherto followed. I feel very desirous to have Prof. C. look again at ~~that~~ this point. It is the 'cue' of our Northern Democracy (whose spirit he understands so well & characterizes so truly) to charge the Pres^{dt} & his supporters with violation of the Constitution in their Emancipation policy; and I am sorry to have so true a friend to Freedom as is Prof. C. give them ^{the support of his opinion} ~~his countenance~~ in this thing. They will use it, - not in his spirit of Ceresse, - but with hostile

purposes alike to the President and to liberty. If you have not already furnished Prof. C. with David Lee Child's pamphlet on "The Rights & Duties of the U. S. Govt. in Time of War, touching Slavery", &c. (I may not have the title precisely), I hope you may have a copy left for his examination. Also, the little tract which our Society published on the same subject, (made up of the views of John Quincy Adams & others,) would be worth sending to him. - Nor do I at all agree with Prof. C. that the re-union of the Old States is "chimerical." Difficult it will be - especially when to the proper strength of the Rebellion is added the sympathy, encouragement, & multifarious help of Northern traitors, and the material aid of England's wealth, ingenuity, art, & science. All these constitute a fearful amount of opposition for our States to contend with; and if it continue as it has been for a year past, our success may be questionable, to say the least. But if Prof. C. fully realised (excuse me for hinting that he may not) the fell spirit of the Confederacy, the hell upon earth they will create for their bondmen if they are not conquered, "subjugated," extirpated as a Slaveholding & Slave-trading power, I feel sure he could not represent their success, in escaping from the Control of the Federal Govt., as a desirable thing. And you will observe that, just at that point, ^{of his lecture,} he seems to have had the accordant support of the Secession-sympathizers in his audience. Apparently a very decided & hearty "No, no," rang out, when he asked if "the subjection of the South to the North [not a very good way of stating the question, I would suggest] were possible or desirable." I say it is very possible, if England & France will stay their hands from "aid & comfort" to the Slave Power; and very desirable, if the future of this Continent (to look no farther) and of its population of all races & colours, their freedom or their slavery, is allowed (as Prof. C. would be the first to grant) to have weight in deciding it. Indeed he expressly introduces this consideration in the sentence immediately preceding his Conclusion. Why then should he seem to recognize the separate existence of the Confederacy as desirable, or as anything but a thing to be deprecated & prevented at all hazards.

I have made these criticisms on Prof. G.'s lecture not in
a captious or a presumptuous spirit, I am very sure. I
do not claim to take the profound philosophical view of
the subject which he does. But being an American abo-
litionist, ~~and that~~ ^{and that} for upwards of a quarter of a century,
and necessarily, from my position, more familiar with
certain phases of the question than he would be likely to be,
- but still more, from recognizing in him so much of candour &
determination to sift out the truth of the business, - I have felt
moved to mention these things to you, in the hope that you
might have an opportunity to convey their substance to him,
however poorly stated they may be by me. -
It is of the very greatest importance now that all sober-
minded, fair-judging men, should clear themselves of all
erroneous conceptions of the real points of the American
contest, and give their influence & voice to the Right
Side, or, at least, ~~with~~ withhold it from the Wrong. If it
is of any consequence to any individual man, or to the
aggregate mass of men, whether Slavery dies or lives
^{then} let all good and true men ^{speak and} act now.

When I wrote you last we were on the eve of our
Annual State Election in Massachusetts. The result was
gloriously cheering. Every conceivable effort had been made
to overthrow Gov. Andrew, & to elect a State Legislature
which would displace Mr. Sumner from the United
States Senate. A most unnatural combination of Boston
wealth & fashion, and Cambridge learning & scholarship,
with the ignorant & pro-slavery Democracy of the State
was made, - ^{The strength of the combination, outside of the City of Boston, was small} but in vain. Gov. Andrew received a
popular majority of 25,000 votes, and a Legislature was
chosen, three fourths at least of whom, it is expected on reliable
grounds, will sustain Mr. Sumner as ~~the~~ Senator for the next
six years. Other States voting the same day did ^{not do so well} ~~the same~~.
The great State of New York, by a slender majority, elected a Democrat.

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Governor believed to be in favour of ending the War by a
 Concession to the Rebels of anything they desire, if they will
 re-unite with the North, - Slavery intact & strengthened.
 The fact that over 100,000 ^{Republican} voters of the State are absent in
 the Army, to less than half that number of Democratic
 Voters, will of itself account for the change. Leaving the City
 of New York out of the Count, the rest of the State gave 20,000
 majority (Wife of the absence of Republican voters as above) to the
 Government & the President - ^{But the overwhelming Democratic vote of the great & corrupt City turned the scales.} Emancipation included. We
 rejoice to have reason to believe that the President fully
 understands the Why & Wherefore of the Vote; he understands that
 it is a rebuke to his Administration for a want of sufficient
 decision & thoroughness in dealing with the Rebellion, and is
 resolved that the future shall atone for the past in these
 respects. He is not intimidated, but aroused; as is enough
 proved by his removal of Gen. McClellan from the Command
 of the Army of the Potomac. Whether Gen. Burnside,
 who is appointed his Successor, has the necessary qualifications
 for the post, remains to be seen. He has done well in a lower
 place; and this we know, that his heart is in his work,
 and that he is no friend of Compromising nor of Slavery,
 none of which ^{things} could be said of McClellan. We feel
 well assured that the hour for determining the issues of this
 War is very nigh at hand. With the bequered traitors
 of the North, ^{to contend with in addition to the Rebellion proper,} the President's & the Country's task becomes
 an immensely difficult one. We must each do his best,
 watch for the traitors, & ^{then} leave the result with Providence.
 This is surely a struggle for Humanity. Let no true
 lover of God or Man be idle, or absent from duty. Now,

Nov. 21st I hope you duly received the several letters I have
 written you since August 1st. My last enclosed a photograph picture
 of John Brown's youngest daughter. This, Mr. Stearns tells me, is a
 gift to you from Mrs. Brown. - Previously to that I wrote to get

your advice as to any further proceedings in the 'Sparrow' case.

Have you on hand (or have I asked you this before?) any copies of D. L. Child's pamphlet, - already referred to in this note, - on "The Rights & Duties of the U. S. Gov. towards Slavery in time of War"? If you have, - as I hope, - I wish you would send them all back to me, only reserving a copy for yourself and one for Prof. Cairnes. If they are all gone, perhaps you could recal a few copies from not distant recipients? Mr. Child is very desirous to get hold of some copies, and the edition here is entirely exhausted & none to be had.

It seems to me that the "American plea", that hitherto the Slave Power has been uppermost in our Government & has filled nearly all important home & diplomatic offices, & controlled the National Policy, - a plea of which you think little, - is indeed a very important one ^{to explain the animus of our Government towards England,} ~~in the case of the country & England.~~ It has often been intimated that ^{the} Americans cherished a hostile feeling to England. I have maintained to you, that I saw no evidence of it which amounted to ^{anything}. ^{Note one striking fact,} The Prince of Wales came amongst us, & was treated with courtesy & marked attention throughout the ^{North} ~~Country~~ - not an exception. To be sure the attentions of some of our Cities to him were snobbish & fulsome; but, even with them, the good feeling was conspicuous. This was universal, I repeat, with all ^{in the North, in Richmond, Virginia, alone were he & his suite insulted.} clashes. Now do you explain, or tem the force of these facts? Yet you ^{still} mingle North & South of our land together, in a censure of being always willing to play the "card" of insulting England; and you adduce Mr. Seward, ^{an exceptional case -} (whose political course for 3 years past has been vacillating & unprincipled, I freely admit, - a disgrace and a damage to Mr. Lincoln's administration) in proof of ^{what} this Northern feeling has been. You are greatly mistaken, - as to the past. - It now appears, from thousands of unmistakable indications, that the hostile feeling & the jealousy were the other way; that it is England which has long cherished animosity to us, grudged our growth & prosperity, was jealous of our increasing strength, ~~and~~ looked with an unconcealed satisfaction on any movement here which promised to pull us down, and was ready to help & foster Uncle Sam's Slavery (!) to help herself and cripple us. Are

not these things essentially so? I wish they were not.
It is a very hard fate for me to have to see them, to admit
them, & to declare them. I am sorry that I cannot possibly
doubt their truth. ^{And if American feeling be to-day resentful to England, what is the reason?} But you say (not in excuse
of British pro-slavery, but in simple explanation of the fact)
that ~~these~~ demoralized state of public opinion in England is
owing mainly to the constant visits & incursions of pro-
slavery Americans. But it seems to me ^{that} that plea is
not advisedly put forward. Is British conscience, or principle,
or opinion, or feeling, - are English people in any sense or
form, - thus at the mercy, & in the power, of unprincipled
men coming among them from abroad, & teaching that all
English ideas of liberty, law, justice are humbug, are nonsense,
and are to be discarded, in deference to these foreign notions
of morals and law? Do Englishmen hold their principles &
opinions, & their respect for their own legislation & ^{national} character, so
loosely as that? Should not these vile propagandists of the
ethics of Slavery have been met with rebuke & scorn? Would
they not have been, had not some secret, selfish motive been
appealed to, ^{had not that motive} & responded favorably to the tempter? The
American visitors brought temptations with them & ^{double-} bribes, &
appealed to every selfish motive of British trade & desire of
wealth. Had the English been an ignorant, a feeble-minded,
a credulous, an easily-injured & deceived race, the
tempters would have been the guilty party. But the facts
were all the other way. England ^{claimed to be the foremost nation of the world; & she} had a history, a character,
a legislation, and a name in the world, - every one of which
furnished the most cogent reasons why she should have spurned
from her ear the damnable suggestions of Slavery and its
base apostles. 'Twas her great sin, not her misfortune,
that she allowed these unprincipled wretches to obtain an
influence among her people. - And you, an old Abolitionist,
do not need to be reminded how much the progress of Human
Freedom in this Country has been set back, again and again,
by Englishmen, yes and Irishmen, coming here, to give the right
hand of British fellowship to our Slaveholders & their Apologists,

- yes, even the representatives of British & Scottish Churches
have done this, over & over again, to the great mortification
and hindrance of the friends of freedom here,

Prof. Cairnes's book was republished in New York, ^{and}
in Boston. I have a copy of it. It is a very neat volume, &
I have had the pleasure of seeing the English copy, - belonging to the
Boston Athenaeum, - and found that you were the printer, and
a very handsome book it is, & ~~very~~ ^{very} creditable to your printing
office. - Prof. C.'s New York ^{friend} is (I suppose) Fr. G. Shaw -
not G. F. - He is the father-in-law of George Wm. Currier -
~~belongs~~ is the oldest son of a large ^{& wealthy} Boston family of sons
and daughters, - the majority of whom, cheerfully discarding
the trammels of fashion & class in which they were brought up
have been nobly true to the Antislavery Cause. Mrs. George
R. Russell (who with an invalid husband is now in Europe), ^{Mr.}
Wm B. Greene (whose husband came home from Paris on the
breaking out of the War, was appointed Colonel of the Mass^{ts} 14th Regt
which, by reason of broken-down health, he has latterly had to resign -
are two of the sisters,

I entirely agree with you in thinking that if the North
~~can~~ ^{can} 'Coop up' Slavery between the Mississippi river, the Gulf, &
the Atlantic, she can quite as easily (very much more so,) ~~end~~
it altogether, & put the miserable source of discord ^{indeed} away
forever.

I devoutly hope that the live, substantial, Antislavery
Convictions of England will express themselves soon. Why are
the Churches so silent? Why cannot they speak, as Mill,
and Cairnes, and Bright, & some others have done? What
wretched twaddle the London Inquirer has been uttering! - i.e. if
various extracts I have seen from it, in an Am^{er} paper, the last six
months, rightly indicate its tone.

My daughter Adeline joins her thanks to mine for your
lecture of Prof. C. She has read it & likes it much. - We are
in pretty good health. My boy Edward is out at Cairo, Illinois,
at the junction of the Ohio & Mississippi rivers, where an Govt is established
an inland, naval Station & Depot. We all send our best regards
to all your family. Ever Yours, Ch. May 18

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